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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR			ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	
709/228,694	01/12/99	PANDYA		А	50353	
– PETER F CORLESS PO BOX 556 MARLBOROUGH MA 01752		IM22/0329	乛	EXAMINER		
				LEE,S		
				ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER	
				1752	12	
				DATE MAILED:	03/29/01	

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks



Office Action Summary

Application No. App 09/228,694

Applicant(s)

Examiner

Group Art Unit Sin J. Lee 1752

Pandya et al.

X Responsive to communication(s) filed on
XI This action is FINAL.
☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under Ex parte Quay#935 C.D. 11; 453 O.G. 213.
A shortened statutory period for response to this action is set to expirethree_ month(s), or thirty days, whichever is longer, from the mailing date of this communication. Failure to respond within the period for response will cause the application to become abandoned. (35 U.S.C. § 133). Extensions of time may be obtained under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a).
Disposition of Claim
Of the above, claim(s) is/are withdrawn from consideration
☐ Claim(s) is/are allowed.
☐ Claim(s) is/are objected to.
☐ Claims are subject to restriction or election requirement.
Application Papers See the attached Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review, PTO-948. The drawing(s) filed on
*Certified copies not received:
Attachment(s) Notice of References Cited, PTO-892 Information Disclosure Statement(s), PTO-1449, Paper No(s). Interview Summary, PTO-413 Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review, PTO-948 Notice of Informal Patent Application, PTO-152
SEE OFFICE ACTION ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES

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1. In view of applicants' argument filed on January 16, 2001, the previously made rejections on claims 1-7, 10-27, and 30-34 over Hinsberg et al (EP'668) are hereby withdrawn. As pointed out by applicants, Hinsberg expressly states that the vinyl polymer of their invention contains hydroxystyrene wherein the hydroxystyrene is suitably the para *or* meta isomer. Therefore, one of ordinary skill in the art would not have been motivated to use a vinyl polymer containing *both* para-hydroxystyrene *and* meta-hydroxystyrene as presently claimed.

2. Claims 23, 27, and 29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

In claim 23, which depends from the claim 20, applicants recite the limitation "z" in the first line. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim (i.e., the claim 20 does not have variable z in the formula IV).

In claim 27, applicants recite, "... wherein the sum of w, x and y is at least about 90 percent of total units of the polymer." Also, claim 29 recites, "... wherein the sum of w', x', y' and z' is at least about 90 percent of total units of the polymer." It is unclear whether applicants mean 90 mole percent or 90 percent by weight.

Appropriate correction or clarification is required. For the purpose of examining the claims 27 and 29 on the merit, the Examiner assumed that applicants meant to claim the sum of w, x, and y (and the sum of w', x', y', and z') being at least about 90 *mole percent* of total units of the polymer (just as in present claim 5).

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3. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

4. Claims 1-34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Watanabe et al (5,844,057).

Watanabe et al teach a chemically amplified positive resist composition containing a polymer having recurring units of hydroxyphenyl groups and acid labile group and a photoacid generator. See particularly, col.2, lines 8-25, col.5, lines 24-67, col.6, lines 1-26, lines 43-45, lines 61-67, col.7, lines 60-65, col.19, lines 29-51.

With respect to present claims 1, 2, 10, 11, 17, 20, 22, 24, and 34, in the formula (3) shown in col.6 of the prior art, it is indicated that the hydroxyl group can be located anywhere on the phenyl ring of the second repeating unit (the one denoted by the mole fraction variable q), which means that the hydroxyl group can be located at the meta, para or ortho position of the

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phenyl ring. Also, the variable m can be 1, 2, or 3. Therefore, one of ordinary skill in the art would have immediately envisaged some of the recurring units q having a single meta-hydroxy group on the phenyl ring and some other recurring units q having a single para-hydroxy group on the phenyl ring. Also for the last repeating unit in the same formula, R5 can be -COOX wherein X is a hydrogen or acid labile group. As examples of the acid labile group, Watanabe et al list six examples one of which is a normal, branched or cyclic alkyl groups of 1-6 carbon atoms (see col.6, lines 21-26), and as specific examples for the normal and branched alkyl groups, the prior art lists seven examples one of which is a tert-butyl group (see col.6, lines 42-45). Since there are only six examples for the acid labile group, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to choose (as a matter of choice) the normal, branched or cyclic alkyl groups of 1-6 carbon atoms to be the acid labile group, i.e., X in the -COOX moiety with a reasonable expectation of achieving a resist components improved in sensitivity, resolution, and latitude of exposure. Also, since there are only seven examples for the normal, branched or cyclic alkyl groups of 1-6 carbon atoms, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to choose (as a matter of choice) a tert-butyl group to be the X in the -COOX moiety with a reasonable expectation of achieving a resist components improved in sensitivity, resolution, and latitude of exposure. When X is a tert-butyl group, then the R⁵ in the last repeating unit of the formula (3) becomes -COO-(t-butyl), and the last repeating unit becomes the presently claimed acrylate acid-labile groups. Therefore, the prior art's polymer of the formula (3) would

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encompass the presently claimed polymer comprising an acrylate acid-labile group, a metahydroxyphenyl group, and a para-hydroxyphenyl group.

With respect to present claims 3, 6, 18, 21, 25, and 26, since the present variable n of these claims can be zero (and the present variable m of the claim 25 can also be zero), the prior art's polymer of the formula (3) also teaches the presently claimed polymers of the claims 3, 6, 18, 21, 25 and 26 as explained above.

With respect to the presently claimed S group-containing repeating unit in claims 8 and 28, the formula (3) shown in col.6 of the prior art indicates that R³ of the -OR³ group attached to the phenyl ring of the third repeating unit is an acid labile group. As the preferred examples for the acid labile group, Watanabe et al list six examples one of which is normal, and branched alkyl groups such as methyl, ethyl, propyl, isopropyl, n-butyl, iso-butyl, and tert-butyl groups. Since there are only six categories of acid labile group examples listed by Watanabe et al, it would have been obvious for one having ordinary skill in the art to choose (as a matter of choice) normal, and branched alkyl groups such as methyl, ethyl, propyl, isopropyl, n-butyl, iso-butyl, and tert-butyl groups to be the acid labile group, R³, with a reasonable expectation of achieving the chemically amplified positive resist composition which is improved in sensitivity, resolution, latitude of exposure, and process adaptability over the conventional resist compositions.

Applicants state on page 10 of the present specification that the suitable S groups include aromatic groups-such as phenyl and that the phenyl group is optionally substituted with non-reactive groups such as alkoxy group. Therefore, the prior art, which says that -OR³ attached to

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the phenyl ring can be methoxy, ethoxy, propoxy, isopropoxy, n-butoxy, iso-butoxy, and tertbutoxy (all of which are alkoxy groups), teaches the presently claimed S-group containing repeating unit.

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With respect to present claims 5, 7, 12, 19, 23, and 27, Watanabe et al teach in col.7, lines 60-65 that the mole fraction of q (the repeating units that contain hydroxy groups) would be 0.2-0.95 whereas the mole fraction of s (the repeating units that contain acid labile group) would be 0-0.5. If one arbitrarily picks 0.9 for the mole fraction q and 0.05 for the mole fraction s, this will give the sum of q and s to be 0.95 (which is 95 mole %). Since this number overlaps with the presently claimed range of at least about 90 mole %, the prior art's teaching would have made the present range prima facie obvious. In the case "where the [claimed] ranges overlap or lie inside ranges disclosed by the prior art," a prima facie case of obviousness would exist which may be overcome by a showing of unexpected results, In re Wertheim, 541 F.2d 257, 191 USPQ 90 (CCPA 1976)

With respect to present claims 9 and 29, Watanabe et al teach in col.7, lines 60-65 that the mole fraction of t to be 0.05-0.8 which will give the sum of q, r, and s to be 0.2-0.95. Since the prior art range of 0.2-0.95 (20-95 mole %) overlaps with the present range of at least about 90%, the prior art's range would have made the present range prima facie obvious. See In re Wertheim, supra.

With respect to present claims 13-16 and 30-33, Watanabe et al teach in col.19, lines 29-39 that their resist composition (including the resin and the photoacid generator) is spin-coated

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onto a *silicon wafer*, exposed to actinic radiation, and developed to form a resist pattern.

Therefore, the prior art teaches the present inventions of these claims. Especially, since applicants state on page 17 of the present specification that the composition may be applied over *silicon* or silicon dioxide wafers for the production of *microprocessors* and other integrated circuit components, the prior art teaches the presently claimed substrate being the microelectronic wafer.

5. Claims 1-34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Urano et al (EP 0 780 732 A2).

Urano et al teach a composition comprising a polymer (b) represented by the formula [2] (shown on pg.7) and a substance which generates an acid on exposure to actinic radiation. The prior art also teaches a pattern forming process which comprises applying its resist material on a semiconductor substrate (such as a silicone wafer), exposing it to actinic radiation through a mask, and conducting development, and the prior art teaches the present inventions of the claims 1-34. See particularly, pg.5, lines 14-20, lines 28-29, lines 37-39, pg.6, lines 14-16, pg.7, lines 1-13, lines 45-50, pg.8, lines 4-6, pg.12, lines 14-17, pg.24, lines 58, pg.25, lines 1-3, lines 8-10, lines 12-17.

With respect to present claims 1, 17, 24 and 34, Urano et al's polymer (b) which is represented by the formula [2] shown on pg.7 contains a single -OH substituted styrene repeating units. Since the formula does not restrict the position of the hydroxy group on the phenyl ring, it is the Examiner's position that one of ordinary skill in the art would have immediately envisaged

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some of the styrene repeating units having the single hydroxy group on the meta position (and unsubstituted at other ring positions as presently claimed) and the rest of the styrene repeating units having the single hydroxy group on the para position. Therefore, it is the Examiner's position that the prior art's formula for the polymer (b) encompasses a polymer having metahydroxyphenyl group and a para-hydroxyphenyl group which is presently claimed. In the third repeating unit in Urano et al's polymer (b), R²¹ is H atom or a lower alkyl group and R²² can be a carboxyl group which may be esterified, a cyano group or a phenyl group which may have one or more substituents. As examples for the carboxyl group which may be esterified, Urano et al teach methoxycarbonyl, ethoxycarbonyl, propoxycarbonyl, butoxycarbonyl, pentyloxycarbonyl and hexyloxycarbonyl. First of all, since there are only three kinds of example for the R²², it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to choose a carboxyl group which may be esterified (as a matter of choice) to be R²² with a reasonable expectation of achieving a resist material suitable for forming a pattern excellent in sensitivity, resolution, mask linearity and other properties. Second of all, since there are only six examples given for the carboxyl group which may be esterified, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to choose (as a matter of choice) the butoxycarbonyl group (an acid-labile group) to be the carboxyl group which may be esterified for the \mathbb{R}^{22} with a reasonable expectation of achieving a resist material excellent in sensitivity, resolution, mask linearity and other properties, and when the R^{22} of the formula [2] is butoxycarbonyl group, the prior art's third repeating unit teaches the presently claimed acrylate acid-labile groups. Therefore, the prior art's formula [2] teaches the

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presently claimed polymer comprising an acid-labile group, a meta-hydroxyphenyl group and a para-hydroxyphenyl group.

With respect to present claims 3, 6, 18 and 25, since the present variable n of these claims can be zero, and the present variable m of the claim 25 can be zero also, the prior art's polymer having the formula [2] teaches the present inventions of these claims as explained above.

With respect to present claims 8 and 28, the prior art's polymer of formula [2] teaches the presently claimed repeating unit having the S group. In the prior art's formula [2], the first repeating unit (the one with the R⁷-substituted phenyl group), R⁷ can be a H atom, a lower alkyl group, a lower alkoxy group, an acyloxy group, a saturated heterocyclic oxy group, or R⁸O-CO-(CH₂)-O- (see pg.6, lines 14-16). Since there are only six examples for the R⁷ group, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to choose (as a matter of choice) a lower alkyl group or a lower alkoxy group to be the R⁷ with a reasonable expectation of achieving a resist material excellent in sensitivity, resolution, mask linearity and other properties. On pg.10, lines 13-14 of the present specification, applicants state that a phenyl group optionally substituted with non-reactive groups such as halogen, alkoxy, alkyl is generally preferred S group.

Therefore, the prior art's polymer having the formula [2] teaches the presently claimed repeating unit having the S group.

With respect to present claims 5, 7, 12, 19, 23, and 27, Urano et al teach that the first repeating unit (which corresponds to the presently claimed repeating unit having the S group of claims 8 and 28) of their polymer (b) having the formula [2] can be present in an amount of 10-

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50 mole % (see pg.12, line 10). This gives 90-50 mole % for the rest of the repeating units, i.e., sum of the repeating units that contain a single-meta hydroxyphenyl group, the repeating units that contain a single-para hydroxyphenyl group, and the repeating units that contain a butoxycarbonyl group. Since this range of 90-50 mole % overlaps with the presently claimed range of at least about 90 %, the prior art's range would have made the present range *prima facie* obvious. See <u>In re Wertheim, supra</u>.

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With respect to present claims 14, 16, 31, and 33, since the prior art teaches their resist material to be coated on a semiconductor substrate such as silicone wafer which is exemplified by applicants, it is the Examiner's position that the prior art teaches the present inventions of these claims.

6. Claims 17-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Watanabe et al (JPO abstract: JP406049137A and DERWENT abstract: 1994-097835 - English abstracts of JP 06049137 A).

Watanabe et al teach (see the English abstracts and the formula (1)-(4) for the repeating units of the polymer shown on pg.2 of JP'137) a block copolymer of p-hydroxystyrene *and* m-hydroxystyrene whose -OH groups are *partially* substituted with t-butoxycarbonyl group (pendant acid-labile group), and thus the prior art's polymer teaches the present inventions of claims 17-18.

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9. Claims 1, 3, 5, and 13-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Watanabe et al (JPO abstract: JP406049137A and DERWENT abstract: 1994-097835 - English abstracts of JP 06049137 A) in view of Watanabe et al (5,844,057).

With respect to present claims 1, 3, and 5, although Watanabe et al (JP'137) does not explicitly teach the presently claimed photoresist composition of these claims, the prior art does teach that their polymer is useful as resist material of high resolution for large-scale integrated circuit (LSI) (see the English abstracts). Another prior art, Watanabe et al ('057), which teaches a polymer comprising hydroxy-substituted phenyl group (some at meta, some at para position) and acid-labile groups (as discussed in paragraph 5 of this Office Action), teaches a photoresist composition containing the polymer and a photoacid generator (see col.1, lines 5-15 and col.2, lines 8-25). Watanabe et al ('057) teach that the polymer which is used as base resin for their photoresist composition is suitable as a fine pattern-forming material in the manufacture of ultra-LSI's. Since the polymer of Watanabe et al (JP'137) and the polymer of Watanabe et al (4057) are very similar, and since Watanabe et al (JP'137) teach that their polymer is useful as resist material of high resolution for LSI, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to combine the polymer taught in JP'137 with a photoacid generator and use the composition as a fine pattern-forming material in the manufacture of LSI as taught by Watanabe et al ('057). Therefore JP'137 in combination with Watanabe et al ('057) teach the present inventions of claims 1, 3, and 5.

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With respect to present claims 13-16, Watanabe et al ('057) teach (col.19, lines 29-51) that their photoresist composition containing the polymer and a photoacid generator is spin-coated onto a silicon wafer, exposed to actinic radiation, and then developed with an aqueous base solution to form a resist pattern for the manufacture of LSIs. Therefore, it would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art to follow Watanabe et al ('057)'s teaching and to spin-coat the photoresist composition containing the polymer of JP'137 onto a silicon wafer, expose, and then develop to form a resist pattern for the manufacture of LSIs because the polymers taught in both of these prior arts are very similar and the prior art JP'137 teaches that its polymer is useful as resist material of high resolution for LSI. Therefore, JP'137 in combination with Watanabe et al ('057) teach the present inventions of claims 13-16.

10. In their REMARKS, applicants argue that Watanabe ('057) is cited for a report of phenyl groups that have multiple phenyl ring substituents and also cited for a polymer that has acid-labile groups pendant to a phenyl group. Applicants also argue that Watanabe does not report a polymer that contains a meta-hydroxyphenyl group that is unsubstituted at available ring positions other than by a single meta-hydroxyphenyl moiety.

First of all, the Examiner would like to point out that Watanabe was cited for the polymer having the general formula (3) shown in col.6 of the prior art. In that formula, the second repeating unit contains m number of -OH groups wherein m can be 1, 2 or 3. Therefore, the Examiner disagrees with applicants' argument that the prior art was cited solely for the phenyl

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groups that have *multiple* phenyl ring substituents. The Examiner cited the prior art's polymer of the formula (3) because m can be 1 as well as 2 or 3.

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Secondly, the formula (3) *clearly* teaches that R⁵ of the last repeating unit of the formula can be -COOX wherein X can be an acid labile group such as normal, branched or cyclic alkyl groups of 1-6 carbon atoms, and as explained above in paragraph 4 of this Office action, the examples for the normal, branched or cyclic alkyl groups include the t-butyl group. When X is t-butyl group, the last repeating unit of the formula (3) becomes the presently claimed acrylate acid-labile group. Therefore, the Examiner disagrees with the applicants' argument that the prior art was cited for the acid-labile groups pendant to a phenyl group only.

Lastly, as pointed out in paragraph 4 of this Office Action, the second repeating unit of the formula (3) shows that there can be a single (when m is 1) hydroxy group attached to the phenyl ring without the restriction on the position of the hydroxy group. Therefore, some phenyl groups of the repeating unit q can have the single hydroxy group on the meta position while the other phenyl groups in the repeating unit q can have the single hydroxy group on the para position. Therefore, the Examiner also disagrees with the applicants' argument that Watanabe does not report a polymer that contains a meta-hydroxyphenyl group that is unsubstituted at available ring positions other than by a single meta-hydroxyphenyl moiety. It is the Examiner's position that the general formula (3) shown on col.6 of the prior art does encompass the polymer presently claimed by applicants.

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Applicants' comparative results set forth in the Rule 132 Declaration were carefully considered however found unpersuasive since the comparison was not made to the closest prior art, Watanabe et al. In order to show that addition of a meta-hydroxyphenyl unit to a polymer containing para-hydroxyphenyl units and acid-labile units can favorably impact dissolution rates and solubility differentials between exposed and unexposed regions, it can be suggested that applicants perform experiments comparing (i) Watanabe's polymer of the formula (3) containing the first repeating unit (since the variable t is positive number which means that the first repeating unit has to be there according to the formula (3)), second repeating unit with only a single para-hydroxy substituent, and the last repeating unit containing the acrylate-acid labile group vs. (ii) Watanabe's polymer of the formula (3) containing the first repeating unit, second repeating unit some of which has a single para-hydroxy substituent and some of which has a single meta-hydroxy substituent, and the last repeating unit having the acrylate-acid labile group (since the variable r can be zero according to the formula (3), the third repeating unit is left out). Please see MPEP 716.02 for more details helpful for showing the unexpected results.

Applicants also argue that Urano et al (EP'732) adds nothing more than the Watanabe citation and that the mere report of a polymer having a phenolic group with hydroxy group in unspecified position clearly does not provide a suggestion of a polymer containing at least three distinct units of an acid-labile group, a meta-hydroxyphenyl group and a parahydroxyphenyl group. However, as discussed above in paragraph 5, it is the Examiner's position that looking at the formula (2) of Urano, one of ordinary skill in the art would have immediately envisaged some

showing the unexpected results.

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of the styrene repeating units r having the single hydroxy group on the meta position and the rest of the styrene repeating units r having the single hydroxy group on the para position. Also, since R²² in the last repeating unit of the formula (2) can be a butoxycarbonyl group (see paragraph 5 above), it is the Examiner's position that the prior art's formula [2] teaches the presently claimed polymer comprising an acid-labile group, a meta-hydroxyphenyl group and a para-hydroxyphenyl group. In order to show that addition of a meta-hydroxyphenyl unit to a polymer containing para-hydroxyphenyl units and acid-labile units can favorably impact dissolution rates and solubility differentials between exposed and unexposed regions, it can be suggested that applicants perform experiments comparing (i) Urano's polymer of the formula (2) containing the first repeating unit , second repeating unit with only a single para-hydroxy substituent, and the last repeating unit containing the acrylate-acid labile group vs. (ii) Urano's polymer of the formula (2) containing

Based on the reasons discussed above, the rejections on claims 1-34 over Watanabe et al'057 or Urano et al'EP'732 and the rejections on claims 1, 3, 5, 13-18 over Watanabe et al"JP'137 still stand.

the first repeating unit, second repeating unit some of which has a single para-hydroxy

substituent and some of which has a single meta-hydroxy substituent, and the last repeating unit

having the acrylate-acid labile group. Please see MPEP 716.02 for more details helpful for

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Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner 11.

should be directed to Sin J. Lee whose telephone number is (703) 305-0504. The examiner can

normally be reached on Monday-Friday from 8:30 am EST to 5:00 pm EST.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's

supervisor, Ms. Janet Baxter, can be reached on (703) 308-2303. The fax phone number for the

organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 305-3599 for after final

responses or (703) 305-7718 for all other responses.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding

should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 305-0661.

S.J.L.

S. Lee

March 27, 2001